



# Why Zoos?

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## Part I : Overview of Business:

Blank Park Zoo, found in Des Moines Iowa has been is existence and open to the public since 1963. The zoo constantly strives to emphasize conservation, preservation and the environmental impact of the decrease of biodiversity throughout the entire biosphere. The zoo outreach goes well beyond the animals housed in the facility. Blank Park is involved in preservation projects around the globe. Some examples of conservation the zoo is currently involved in are:

**Species Survival Plans:**The Blank Park Zoo currently participates in seven endangered species breeding programs in cooperation with other AZA accredited institutions.

**Prairies For Agriculture:** To improve Midwestern farms AND the environment by increasing the use of diverse, native prairie plantings to provide agricultural and environmental benefits.

## Part II: Job Specifics

Blank Park Zoo spends a great deal of time, energy and problem solving to insure one basic premise is followed within the confines of the zoo. What is the most humane, animal friendly way in which to run a zoo. They constantly strive to insure that the stress animals may experience for whatever reason is minimized as much as possible and the animals feel comfortable while in the zoo.

One of my duties while at the zoo was an involvement in “zoo talks”. These talks are were zoo keeps or trainers inform zoo visitors about the animals as zoo trainers demonstrate some behaviors the trainers have taught them. During these zoo talks there is an emphasis on species survival, conservation and habitat destruction and what can be done to help insure the survival of threatened or endangered species.

## III. Introduce the problem:

### Do we need to have zoos?

One common question we are asked during zoo talks is, “Wouldn’t these animals be happier in the wild?” This questions has merit, or at least can generate some meaningful debate. Students are asked to research the history of zoos throughout the ages. After doing some research students are asked to create a position paper which underscores their view regarding do we or do we not need to have zoos in today’s society.

### Do zoos serve any purpose other than places to see animals normally found in the wild?

Students will be given an area measured in acres. (different students will be given different amounts of land to develop). Students will also be assigned different species of animals and then they will be required to research which species could be housed together based upon their research AND they will design their zoos dependent upon space needed, animal species etc.

## IV. BACKGROUND

Students will be directed to research the history of zoos. Where were some of the first zoos created? What was the initial intent for creating zoos, what purpose were they intended to perform.

After researching the history of zoos and why they came to exist, students are then expected to change their focus and take a position regarding whether there is still a place for zoos in today’s world.

The position students take must be based in research. They are encouraged to incorporate their opinion in the paper but the statements they utilize in their position paper must have some factual basis to back up their view.

## V. Business Solution:

We are going to work from the assumption that there is indeed a place for zoos in our society. Regardless of your position regarding whether zoos should exist or not, your task is to design a zoo.

—> Students will be given the dimensions of the area they have to design their zoo (some average amount)

—> Students will be given a list AND NUMBER of species they will have to design their zoo for.

They will have to design their zoo based upon the needs of their animals AND they will also to have to research the possibility of putting various species together in order to maximize the utilization of space.

## VI. Student Solutions.

Hopefully at the conclusion of the PBL, the project will generate:

- 1) An appreciation for the role that zoos play in today’s society.
- 2) A basic understanding of animal husbandry and what types of considerations must be looked at when developing the structural components of a zoo.
- 3) An appreciation for the need for conservation of habitat and endangered species and the role that zoos play in conservation.